
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1028 D Street, NE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	June 28, 2012	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	12-434	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Amanda Molson	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant Adeola Sanni, with drawings prepared by Architectural Design Graphics, requests concept approval for new construction on a vacant lot at 1028 D Street, NE in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

The lot located at 1028 D Street, NE has been vacant for at least ten years. Historic permit data shows that the site was occupied by a rowhouse beginning in 1895, the permit for which also covered construction of 1026, 1030, and 1032 by speculative developer S. Carr. The three-story brick residence was still in existence as of a 1927-1928 Sanborn map that shows its bay projection and footprint. The vacant lot was recently acquired by a new owner.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to construct a two-unit rowhouse on the lot, replacing the single-family residence that existed historically. The massing would mimic the height and depth of existing rowhouses on the block, with many of the same architectural features. Both units would be accessed through a shared front door, with the unit occupying the basement and first floor also having access to the rear yard. Constructed of brick, the rowhouse would feature a projecting bay of the same proportions as others on the row, one-over-one double windows, and a full-lite entrance door reached by concrete steps matching the material and design of neighboring houses.

Evaluation

This project is a welcome opportunity to begin construction at a presently vacant lot. The Board's review of new construction projects is somewhat more flexible than the closer scrutiny applied to alterations to historic buildings, requiring that the new building *not be incompatible* with the character of the streetscape and the historic district (as opposed to *compatible*). With minor modifications to the plan and close coordination with HPO to select appropriate materials, the new construction will be an enhancement to the streetscape.

HPO has encouraged the applicant to avoid a "carbon copy" of other rowhouses on the block, knowing that the craftsmanship and design details of historic buildings cannot be matched today. Instead, a building that replicates the massing of other houses on the block while utilizing somewhat simplified design details will allow the new construction to sit comfortably and quietly into the row without becoming a distraction or failing to read as a convincing replica of

the original. As construction drawings are prepared, the applicant should consult closely with HPO on the following clarifications and revisions:

- Although the applicant has assured HPO that the depth of the new house will match that of the abutting properties at 1026 and 1030, there is no comparative indication of the footprint of these buildings in the site plan or the proposed floor plans (and it is worth noting that 1030 includes a rear addition). Approval of the concept plans is conditioned on the understanding that the rear wall of 1028 will terminate in the same plane as the original rear wall of the adjacent houses, and this must be clearly shown in the construction plans for final approval to be granted.
- In consultation with HPO, the applicant agreed to fire-rate the roof in order to avoid the added height that would come with building parapet walls to meet code. This change is shown throughout the elevation drawings but is unchanged on the cover sheet, which still denotes a parapet wall is to be used. The removal of the parapet walls is a condition of approval and should be shown clearly throughout the plans, with notes on the fire-rated roof also integrated.
- The applicant has told HPO that the basement windows on the front elevation will be sized to meet egress requirements. The basement windows shown on the proposed elevation appear rather short. Though these minimal proportions would be in keeping with the size of basement windows at other houses on the row, the exact dimensions of the basement windows should be specified after consulting further with DCRA.
- Materials are not noted for the lead walk, front door, window headers, door headers, rear fence, or cornice banding around the first, second, and third stories. Additionally, a design for the front railing is not shown. The applicant should work with HPO to choose these materials and design details, integrating specifications and illustrative drawings into the final plans. A brick sample must be provided with the permit application, and a window and door schedule, providing all dimensions and materials, should be also included in the final plans.
- Minor adjustments should be made to the size of the front door, which is too tall, and the transom above, which is too short. Additionally, the elevation drawings show the window headers on the third floor front of the bay oddly connected and expands between the ganged bay windows on the first and second floor in an alternative material to brick. These may simply be drafting errors, but they should be corrected in the final plans.
- Although the front elevation drawing shows a slight projecting in the brickwork on the third floor, consistent with the design of the adjacent houses, this projection is not shown in the third floor plan. If this slight projection is to be included, which is optional given that this is not a historic building, then it should be carefully detailed in the final drawings.
- The rear elevation drawing shows unfinished cinderblock supporting the ground floor of the porch. This is rarely an appropriate finish material for use in historic districts, and the base of the porch should instead be clad in brick or parged in stucco.

- The applicant has agreed to locate the meter box on the interior of the property or on the rear elevation. A large, two-stack meter box will no doubt be needed to serve two units, with the possibility of a third meter if shared lighting, sprinklers, etc. are planned. The drawings currently show the meter box located in the shared foyer on the first floor, which is an ideal location. The applicant should work with Pepco and electrical engineers from DCRA to ensure that this location is achieved.
- Though not a preservation issue, the applicant should consult with DCRA on egress requirements. At present, the upper unit, which occupies the second and third stories, has no access to the backyard, as the deck serving this unit lacks any means of reaching the ground.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept with the conditions discussed above and delegate final approval to staff. *However, this should not be construed as approval for any necessary zoning relief.*